



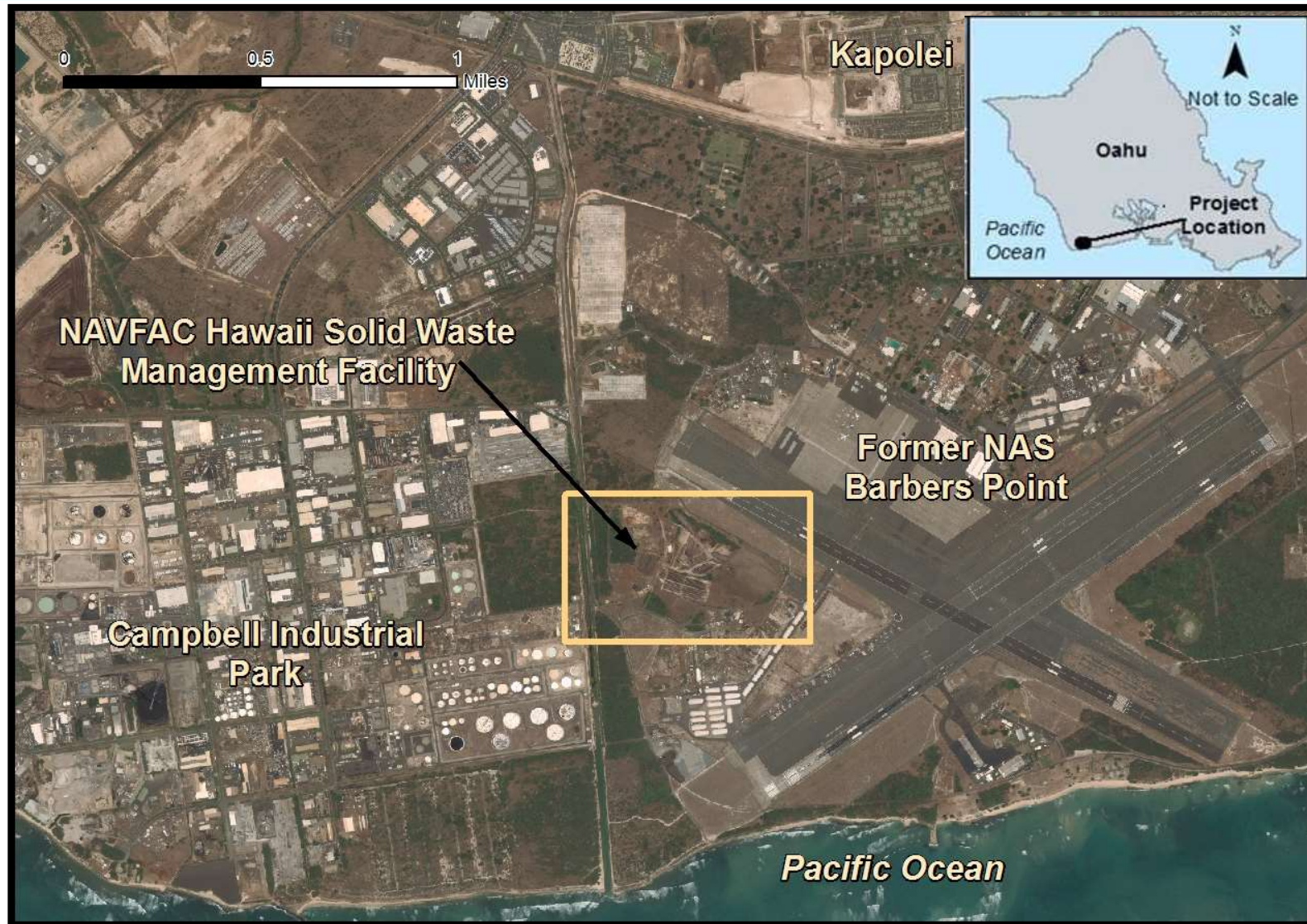
# Selecting a Final Remedy in the Face of Negative Public Blogs

**Presented By**  
**Jan Kotoshirodo**  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC)  
Hawaii

## **Share challenges and lessons learned in addressing negative public comments to the Navy's proposed CERCLA remedy for the Barbers Point Sanitary Landfill site:**

- Site background and history
- Navy's Proposed Plan
- Public Interest, Negative Comments and Spread of Misinformation
- Navy's Actions
- Lessons Learned

# Barbers Point Sanitary Landfill



# Site Location



- Site located on Navy retained property at the NAVFAC Hawaii Solid Waste Management Facility
- Approximately 4.8 acres inside a former man-made Coral Pit
- Adjacent to Consolidation Unit site, which is currently managed with a landfill cover and Land Use Controls (LUCs)

# Site History



- 1942-1976: Disposal of municipal waste, construction debris, pesticide-related waste
- 1976-1991: Disposal of bagged asbestos
- 1997: Landfill closed and sand/gravel cover placed over site
- 2009: Heavy rains compromised landfill cover
- 2009+: Cover supplemented with compost from NAVFAC Hawaii Solid Waste Management Facility



# Navy Investigations: Sanitary Landfill



- 1983: Initial Assessment Study
- 1988 Verification Confirmation Study
- 1999: Remedial Investigation (RI)
  - Investigated groundwater, asbestos in surface soil, and soil gas
  - “No further action” recommended based on current land use. Site was acceptable for human and ecological receptors
- 2015: RI Addendum
  - Needed to address data gaps in 1999 RI
  - Evaluated surface soil for potential chemicals of concern (1999 RI only tested for asbestos)
  - Evaluated current soil cover for suitability as long-term cover



# Additional Groundwater data



- Site is not a drinking water source
- 2004 – 2013: Groundwater sampling performed as part of Long Term Monitoring (LTM) at the adjacent Consolidation Unit site
  - Five monitoring wells sampled semi-annually for VOCs, SVOCs, PCBs, asbestos, TPH, and metals
- 2009: Discontinued TPH, PCBs and asbestos



- Big picture approach: Combine the future LTM for the Sanitary Landfill with the same monitoring well network used for the Consolidation Unit site.

# RI Addendum Recommendation



- Conclusions:

- Nature and extent of chemicals of concern in surface soil are defined
- Site is acceptable for human and ecological receptors based on current (industrial) land use
- Current soil cover is not adequate as a long-term landfill cover

- Recommendation

- Conduct a Feasibility Study to evaluate alternatives to protect current and future receptors from exposure to landfill material

# Feasibility Study

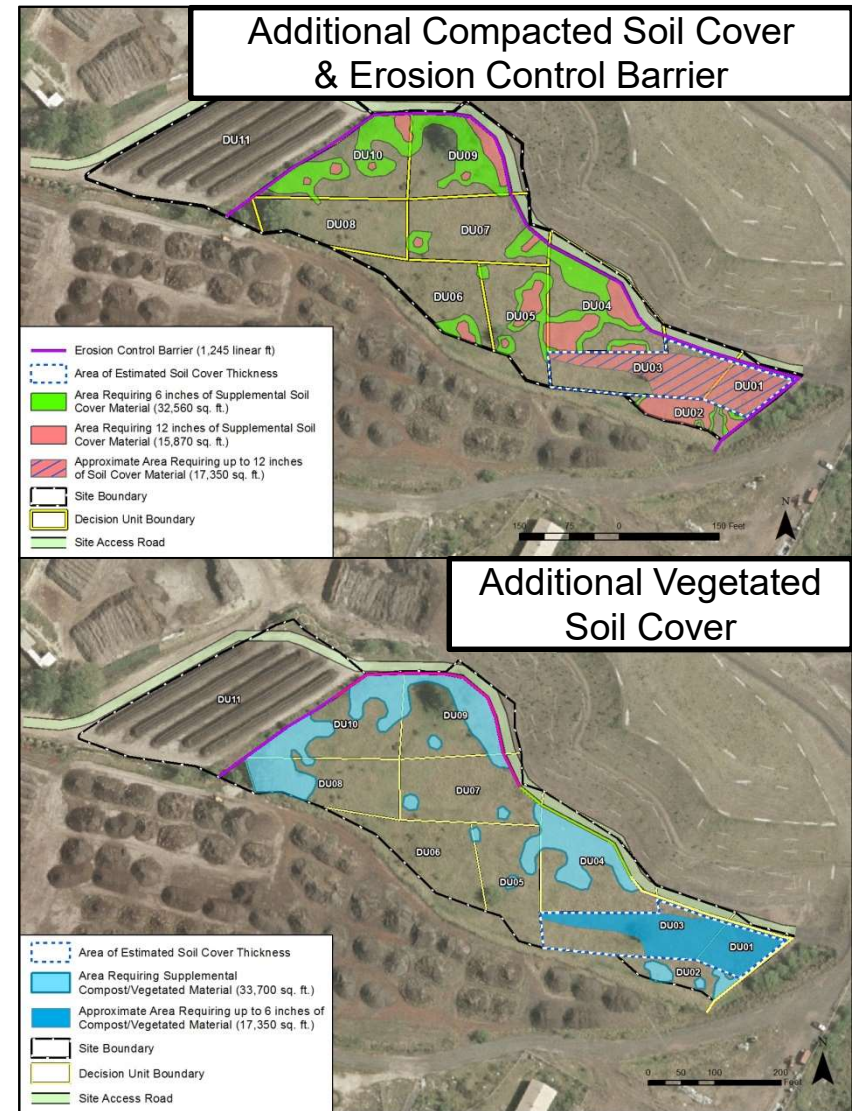


- Four alternatives evaluated
- Alternative 1: No Action
- Alternative 2: LUCs
  - Install signs and perform LTM, groundwater sampling and 5-year reviews
- Alternative 3: LUCs with Supplemental Landfill Cover and Erosion Control
  - Implement Alternative #2
  - Increase thickness of landfill soil/vegetated cover
  - Add erosion controls
- Alternative 4: Clean Closure
  - Excavate all landfill material
  - Allow unlimited use / unrestricted exposure

# Preferred Alternative



- Alternative 3: LUCs with Supplemental Landfill Cover and Erosion Control
  - Protective of human and ecological receptors by preventing direct exposure to landfill material
  - Prevents offsite migration of landfill material and contaminated soil
  - Achieves containment requirements of the presumptive remedy for CERCLA municipal landfills



# Proposed Plan Public Meeting



**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING  
AND AVAILABILITY OF PROPOSED PLAN FOR  
JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, KALAELOA,  
SANITARY LANDFILL SITE**

The Navy announces a public meeting at the staff lounge of Kapolei High School at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 23, 2017 to discuss the Proposed Plan for the Former Naval Air Station Barbers Point Sanitary Landfill Site on Navy retained property at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Kalaheo, Oahu, Hawaii.

The Proposed Plan summarizes the results of previous environmental investigations conducted at the Sanitary Landfill site. The Navy, with concurrence from the State of Hawaii Department of Health, proposes a supplemental landfill cover with erosion control and land use controls to ensure long-term protection of human health and the environment.

On May 23, 2017, the Navy will begin a 30-day public comment period for the Proposed Plan. The public is encouraged to attend the public meeting on May 23, 2017, when the Proposed Plan will be presented. Verbal and written comments may be provided at this public meeting. Interested agencies, individuals and groups unable to attend the public meeting are encouraged to provide written comments no later than June 22, 2017. Upon review and consideration of public comments, a Decision Document will be prepared to document the decision. Additional information on the site and a copy of the Proposed Plan is available in the Navy's CERCLA Administrative Record File and the following Information Repositories: University of Hawaii at Manoa Hamilton Library - Hawaiian and Pacific Collection and the Ewa Beach Public and School Library. For questions or comments regarding this action, please contact Ms. Denise Emsley at the U.S. Navy Public Affairs Office at (808) 471-7300 or [denise.emsley@navy.mil](mailto:denise.emsley@navy.mil).  
(SA988339 5/7/17)

- Public notification for Proposed Plan meeting
  - Published in the local newspaper two weeks prior to meeting
  - Notice remained on newspaper website for 7 days
  - No members of the public attended the meeting
  - 30 day public comment period through June 22, 2017

# Public and Media Interest



- Three weeks after the Proposed Plan Public Meeting; one week remaining on 30-day public comment period...
- An active member of the public requested a copy of the Proposed Plan
- Two days later, the same individual distributed an email titled ***“Under the radar, Ancient Ewa Freshwater Karst Pond – Navy PCB Toxic Waste Dump”***...
  - Distorted and some irrelevant information
  - Sent to CBS News, 60 Minutes, all three local news stations, and others



# Fact Check



- ***Was the Barbers Point Sanitary Landfill a “PCB toxic dump”?***

No. It was used to dispose of municipal waste, construction debris, pesticide-related waste, and bagged asbestos.

- **Was the Barbers Point Landfill an “ancient freshwater karst pond”?**

No. The site is a former man-made coral pit; not a freshwater pond or sinkhole.

# Public Interest



- Continued circulation of emails from the same concerned citizen...
  - ***“Ewa Beach Kalaeloa Area A Massive Scale Toxic Waste Dumping Pollution Area”***
  - ***“Navy seeks comment on waste mitigation plan – but doesn’t answer phone”***
- Emails sent to EPA, State of Hawaii Department of Health, University of Hawaii, local legislators, congressional delegation, and others
- No emails sent to the Navy

# Concerns expressed by the public



- Blogs with “fake news”
- Views that Navy did not publicize the meeting and is therefore hiding something
- Misconception that the Navy is creating a “new” landfill or dump site
- Concerns that the landfill is not contained or controlled, and is polluting the ocean
- Preference to remove the entire landfill
- Local state senator and several commenters requested an extension to the public comment period
- Requests for presentations to two neighborhood boards (areas adjacent to the site)

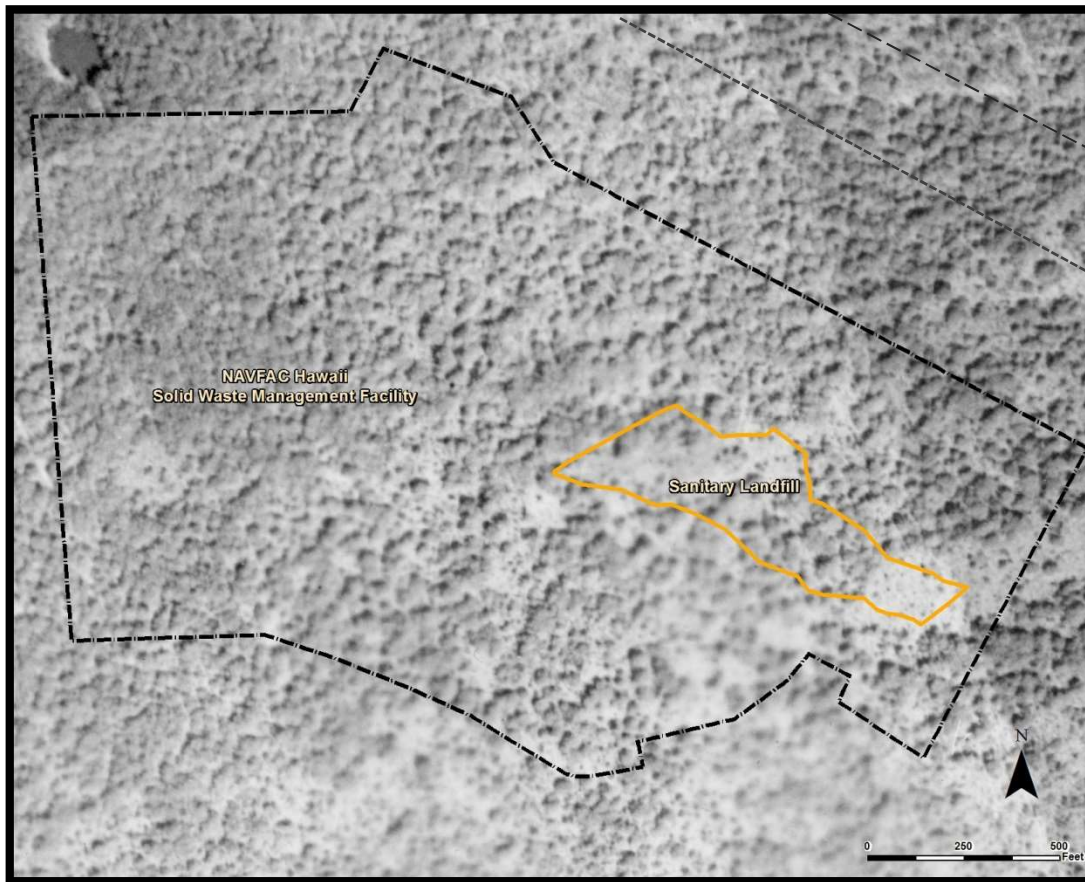
# Navy Response



- Navy hosted an Open House meeting (Poster Boards) and extended the public comment period an additional 30 days
- No presentations at Neighborhood Board meetings
- Rush to publish a second newspaper notice, and have the Open House within one-week
- Email notification sent to all Pearl Harbor Restoration Advisory Board members
- Email notification sent to individuals who provided comments to the Proposed Plan



# Open House: Navy Messages



- Site is a former man-made coral pit; not a freshwater pond or sinkhole (1928 aerial photo)
- Site data shows that there are no concerns for migration of COPCs to the ocean
- The proposed remedial action is an acceptable remedy for landfills
- Regulator concurrence

# Open House: Public Feedback



- Public feedback during the Open House:
  - Public attendance: 25 people; 7 expressed interest in attending Pearl Harbor RAB meetings
  - Some positive feedback on Poster Board format and clarification of facts by Navy SMEs
  - A few individuals still disagreed with leaving the landfill material in-place; some still convinced that it is polluting the ocean

# Additional Public Comments



- Public feedback after the Open House:
  - More negative blogs
  - Total of 43 comments received on the Proposed Plan
  - Many comments not relevant
  - Longest comment from the 'concerned individual' = 48 pages

## Hawaiian wetlands for Navy dump

SUBHEAD: This military chemical dump proposal threatens Oahu's Ewa leeward shores.

**By Kane Hili on 29 June 2017 for Kanehili News -**  
(<http://kanehili.blogspot.com/2017/06/wetlands-navy-chemical-dump.html>)



Image above: Site used by migratory and endangered Hawaiian birds has been gradually bulldozed over for Navy use as chemical dump. From original article.

# Key Take Away Messages



- Public participation:
  - Anticipate public interest and consider the most effective methods of notification
  - Share information at RAB meetings
- Prepare the Navy team:
  - Engage leadership and PAO early
  - Risk communication training
- Responding to all public comments:
  - When refuting a comment, be able to reference a document or report
  - Stay consistent with the Navy's message
  - In cases where comments are numerous and some not relevant to the project, respond to grouped issues relevant to the project.
  - Remain polite

# Contacts and Questions



## Points of Contact

**NAVFAC LIST FEC: Jan Kotoshirodo, NAVFAC Hawaii**

– [jan.kotoshirodo@navy.mil](mailto:jan.kotoshirodo@navy.mil)

## Questions ?